

PHOTO ENFORCEMENT

Mayor Denis Law

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We live in a fast-paced society. And our car is the tool we use to get us from one spot to another, as fast as we dare to drive.

Many motorists find traffic signals to be a mere nuisance that just causes irritating delays. So if a little shot of extra gas will eliminate the need to wait for a red light cycle, hundreds of drivers opt to take the chance. And running a red light only poses an occasional risk of being seen by a police officer that may result in a ticket.

The main hazard that most drivers fail to consider is causing a serious accident. Red light running results in over 150,000 injuries and several hundred fatalities every year in the U.S.

Renton has joined many other jurisdictions in trying to reduce the number of accidents by installing red light cameras at four of our intersections. The cameras went live on May 1 and during the first three weeks of testing, the city issued hundreds of warning citations to violators. Beginning tomorrow, warning tickets will be replaced with citations that come with a \$124 fine.

And later this summer, speed cameras will be utilized in three school zones as a test to see if we can reduce the amount of speeding that occurs when students are present.

The city has provided motorists with plenty of notice on where these cameras are located, and signs are posted at each of the intersections. It's not surprising to learn from other jurisdictions that the majority of violations are coming from commuters who are using local streets to avoid freeway backups.

While some critics will argue that money is the motivation for cities to use traffic cameras, they quickly forget that these poor driving habits frequently result in serious injuries to other motorists. If we do receive revenues exceeding the cost of this enforcement program, these dollars will be dedicated to additional police enforcement and other traffic calming devices in our neighborhoods to address one of our most frequent citizen complaints.

City employees will also be held responsible if they are caught on the camera, except police and fire vehicles that are actually responding to an emergency call.

For more information on Renton's Photo Enforcement Program, please visit rentonwa.gov.